Michael Madhusudan Dutt

Brajangana Kabya

with a note on Michael's time in Bengal

presented in translation by

Sarbeswar Jana

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Dedicated
lovingly
To
PadmaShri Leander Paes
(Direct descendant of Michael Madhusudan Dutt)
Indian Tennis Icon
and
Philanthropist

By the same author

Beauteous Bengal
(Translation of Jibanananda Das's *Rupasi Bangla*)

Forthcoming Titles
A random collection of Bengali poems
Anubade Kabita Bichitra
Bengal Timeline

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FOREWORD

I feel honoured to have the opportunity to write a foreword on a literary project, which is linked to Bengal and my beloved city Kolkata and at the same time it has a connecting link to our illustrious predecessor, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, a literary prodigy, who was my ex-wife Jennifer's grandfather.

I, myself, belong to the sports-world and am not any connoisseur of Bengali literature; but still who does not know about Michael's exemplary and revolutionary contribution to the Bengali literary scene in the nineteenth century?

I believe Mr. Sarbeswar Jana (though himself a professional engineer and a part-time writer), the author-translator of one of Michael's masterpieces, viz. 'Brajangana Kabya' has done a commendable job and added an interesting NOTE on Michael's time in Calcutta.

The theme of Michael's epic ballad is that eternal love-story of Radha & Krishna, which has been the principal element of innumerous literary and folklore creations since time immemorial and even now popular among Indian masses, written beautifully with great love and care by Michael and translated lovingly by the author.

The theme of the translator-author's extensive NOTE is the then-prevailing condition of Calcutta, Bengalees and the Bengali Renaissance period, which the author has successfully knitted together to offer a lucid reading.

I understand from the author that the main objective of his

writing the book is spreading the message of the Bengali poetry to the poetry-lovers in general. This, I appreciate very much.

I wish and hope that the reading public will take the book in right spirit to enjoy it and the expectation of the author would be fulfilled.

Dr. Vece Paes
Kolkata
31.12.2014

Introductory poems

KRISHNA

O immense Light and thou, O spirit-wide boundless Space,
Whom have you clasped and hid, deathless limbs, gloried face?
Vainly lie Space and Time, "Void are we, there is none."
Vainly strive Self and World crying, "I, I alone."
One is there, Self of Self, Soul of Space, Fount of Time,
Heart of hearts, Mind of minds, He alone sits, sublime.
Oh, no void Absolute self-absorbed, splendid, mute,
Hands that clasp hold and red lips that kiss blow the flute.
All He loves, all He moves, all are His, all are He!
Many limbs sate His whims, bear His sweet ecstasy.
Two in One, Two who know difference rich in sense,
Two to clasp, One to be, this His strange mystery.

SRI AUROBINDO *(Collected poems 590)*

LOVE

Love is happiness.
'Saw a Sea and got into it to bathe.
After the bath,
Looked around at,
Hit the wind of sadness!

All is pure and fresh.
The love is a lake, pure in its water.
The shark of misery
Follows far and nigh;
Life is at risk—a mess.

Elders are against,
The thrilling water, the lure of living fish,
Nuts and water fruits,
All full of prickles.
Water everywhere, the sullying weeds—
Tangled all over even if you sieve.

Inside and out always,
Irritates and tickles,
Where is the happiness, God-given?
Says Chandidas:
"Hark oh! Binodinni, miss
"Sorrow and happiness
"Are twin brothers,
"Whoever loves looking for happiness
"Sorrow is the result
"And he is in a mess!"

Translated from CHANDIDAS

SURRENDER

Like a drop of water on the scorching hot shores
My mind forgets you and adores
Self and sons, friends and women;
Now of what use will I be then?
Oh Madhab! My end is frustration, I cry morose!

You are the saver of the universe,
Kind to all the afflicted;
And so my faith is in you committed.
I spend half the life in sleep,
Oh! A long time, I lose as a child and sick
And enjoy with voluptuous women
In those wonderful gardens.
Then where is the time for me to worship?

Endless lives lose in you,
Ye have neither beginning nor end,
Everything is born of you,
Everything loses in you,
Like waves of ocean!

Says Bidyapati, "Minding the catastrophe at the end,
"Know that there is no way, but You and Your domain.
"Start to finish,
"Lord, I profess;
"Now to save me is you obligation".

Translated from BIDYAPATI

A QUERY
"PRASNA"

Who will tell me
My heart awakes all the time
You have chosen your seat on heart of mine
In my mind are your bright eyes
Never do I close the eyes.

Tottering is the lotus of heart at your feet
My eyes-pair is crying tears filled with
Love-saturated body my happiness complete
Just wants to meet you and death.

Your flute-sound is ambrose and poison too
Rending my heart and stealing it you
The earth fills with uncontrolled cries
Crosses the limit the overflowing life.

Seeing your laughter, the spring arrives fast
Hearing the flute cuckoos sing at last
The wayward bees pour into the world must
Touching the twin lotus-feet high.

The Gopa maids are of radiant beauty,
Jamuna is happy, the bushes are flowery,
Gentle wind on blue water ripple—y
The moments to lose heart and life.

Your thirsty eyes dazzle your visage
Radha trembles at your sweet touch
Heart and life smitten by gem-inlaid love
Prostrate hers self under His feet.

"Who are you, who you, everybody asks!
Days and nights wiping flowing tears—"
Says Bhanu,—"Clearing all these doubts
"Lay down life at His feet".

Translated from BHANUSINGHER PADABALI of TAGORE

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

MADHU

Michael Sri Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) or MADHU, in short, of the mid-nineteenth century, anglicized, upper-crust society of Bengal, appeared as a colossus on the Bengali literary scene, which was at a very low level till then, inspite of his eminent predecessors like Bharat Chandra Rai Gunakar (1712-60) and Iswar Chandra Gupta or Gupta-Kabi (1812-59) who started Bengal's poetic journey and Tattwobodhini Group of Akshay Kumar Dutta (1820-86) and Rajendralal Mitra (1822-91) which gave an appreciable lift to Bengali prose.

MADHU's poetry was pure magic during his time and even till today. His work was by and large appreciated at his time but, largely ignored and ridiculed, save and except by the great Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-91). Even till 15 years after his death, his works and he himself were totally overlooked by the Bengali Society, although some later poets like Nabin Chandra Sen (1887-1909) and Hem Chandra Banerjee (1838-1903) followed MADHU's poetry-line.

In spite of his parental wealth, MADHU was poor and almost penniless, when he abruptly left for Madras and also when he came back to Calcutta. He and his family had to live by his books only; but his writing hardly paid. Then, whoever said that poetry paid, save and except for the Victorian-age poet Laureate Alfred Tennyson (1809-92). Countless poets before and after him till this age—in any language—had to switch over from poetry to prose-writing to

support himself! Another Victorian-age poet Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) had to switch over to prose-writing at the age of 50!

As writings were not paying, six years after MADHU came back from Madras, he had to put a stop to his Bengali poetry-writing chapter in Calcutta and go abroad (by selling his parental property) to become a barrister. Through the kind sympathetic and benevolent efforts of Vidyasagar, be became a barrister and arrived back in Calcutta, practiced law at Calcutta High Court, but was still in poverty, as he was spendthrift and at the same time, benevolent in giving away all he had, whenever anyone wanted anything of him.

MADHU'S fate of neglect and ridicule from his own countrymen was not unique to him only; a sample of language used to laugh at his famous introduction of noun-verbs in Bengali runs thus:

"Tebilita Sutradhar kaparila tanti..."

Similar has been the experience of stalwarts like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (Innumerable skits, farces, plays and songs were innovated to ridicule Vidyasagar's widow-re-marriage scheme), Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) and Rabindranath Tagore(1861-1941). Tagore once famously said that if he was born again, he wished not to be born a Bengali. Nirod C. Chaudhuri typically classified Bengalees as a self-annihilating race. Poet Jibanananda was neglected during his lifetime and even later until his name could be saved by the great Buddhadeb Bose, who himself also had to face neglect. Vivekananda was barred from visiting Dakishineswar Temple towards the end of his life! Vidyasagar lay on a sick bed at Karmator forlorn, but for the gracious visit of Sri Ramkrishna.

MADHU'S Time

MADHU'S time was the Age of Revolution (1775-1840) in the West. Its Period of Enlightenment (1680-1900) was drawing to a close. The Industrial Revolution (1700/50-1900), 'with its attendant oppression of pale Englishmen in the farms, mines, mills, barracks and factories in England', was in full swing. The Age of Exploration (1914-91) was on. The Age of Empire (1875-1914) i.e. The Age of Colonization and the Colonial rule of India was spreading roots. 'In Bengal, skeletal and emaciated brown men, mostly farmers, were

being flogged to work on fields, railways, bridges, mines and mills to produce to support the administrative machinery in India and to supply raw materials for England', so that 'the upper crust of their society might live in luxury and feed minimally their illiterate, diseased countrymen and uplift them from the state of penury, under-development, under-nourishment, semi-feudal realm and religious factionalism, in which they were in, almost towards the end of the eighteenth century'.

MADHU appeared in Bengal at a most momentous and epoch-changing period in history of Bengal—even of India. British Empire was expanding and annexing states/kingdoms, one after another and consolidating with a dogged determination. Wide-spread discontent against the British, particularly in Bengal, was brewing. Wahabi Revolt with Titumir's resistance and peasant uprising (1782-1831), Faizi movement (Dadu Miah) (1842), Chuad revolt (1799), Santal uprising (1824-73) under the leadership of Sidhu and Kanu had happened, shaking up the British dominance hard and making them nervous. All these and more ultimately culminated in the Rebellion of 1857, the so-called India's first war of independence—otherwise called by the English as Sepoy Mutiny. However, but for one incident at Barrackpore, Bengal did not play any role in the rebellion, not even Bihar or large parts of UP. At that time middle class Bengalees just acquired a taste for aping the English and learned fast about their culture and style of education.

MADHU'S time—Calcutta

Towards the end of the 17th century and even early in the 18th century, Calcutta was semi-urban and did not have proper roads. At that time elephants, camels, horses, bullock-carts and single-horse-drawn carts were the usual mode of transport. Towards 1840's (i.e. over 150 years after Job Charnock was in Calcutta!) the Chitpore Road was some sort of a road of stone chips. Only from the start of the 19th century, there were changes; Macadum-surfaced roads were built and illuminated with gas lights. However, the main mode of transport was horse-carts, horse-pulled tram cars, 'duli's and 'palki's. Local gentle folk and even David Hare and Vidyasagar

moved in palkis. Later, came cars like Lando, Featon, Braham (4-wheeled, pulled by two horses), Brown Berry (4-wheeled, pulled by one horse), Keranchi, Victoria Chhakra, TomTom, Ekka, Tanga etc. High officers and fashionable Babus used to import horses and cars, while general public moved on foot for negotiating distances.

MADHU'S time—Social reforms in Bengal

MADHU's was the time, when Bengal, inspired by Western ideas, started Reform movements, spear-headed by Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1833). The Bengali Society including particualry the upper sections, was then ridden with many social evils and practices: like Sati, child marriage, child labour, polygamy, water-tight caste system, untouchability (though not to that extent as elsewhere in India), Kulin system, dowry system, idolatry, bondage of confusing and expensive range of rituals forced on poor people, depriving women from education and property rights, forcing widows to undergo humiliating penances and cheating of poor people by iending money at exorbitant rates etc.

Rammohan's efforts with the help of the then new Governor General, Lord William Bentinck, his friend, resulted in enacting laws abolishing 'sati' in 1879. Vidyasagar's super-human efforts fructified in passing the widow re-marriage law in 1856. Both the above great men and others set up schools for boys and girls and started many magazines. Vidyasagar wrote those simple master-pieces which would teach generations of Bengali boys and girls the rudiments of Bengali literacy and literature. But still the bulk of the other evils cited above continues even now, awaiting aggressive solution of some, if not all, problems by Bengalees of the future.

Meanwhile Englishmen were firmly engaged in anglicizing the upper stratum of the Bengali gentle folk, for which purpose, they set up schools, for producing translators, clerks and administrative back-up staff i.e. the pliable, manageable ruling mob for their continuously expanding territorial ambition.

At the same time, the fruits of scientific and technological discoveries of the West were being introduced, for the purpose of administration, exploitation and wider subjugation. In the beginning

Englishmen considered India/Bengal as supplier of Raw materials only. Later when they industrialized in England, they wanted to push finished products into 'India', thus killing the traditional skills of Indians. Then, when for administrative reasons, Railways etc. were introduced in India, they found it convenient to make some factories also here for twin purposes of getting maintenance components handy, and exploitation of cheap labour! (paid at prices, as a master pays a salve! All to their convenience only!!). At the time, the 'Babu Culture' (1760-1843) of Calcutta had been polluting the cultural arena in Bengal and a class was being created to beg favour of the white men. For generations, Bengal's youth were wasted, women humiliated and conscience coarsened.

State of Bengali language and literature at MADHU's time

MADHU's sphere of activity was restricted to Bengali literary field, which was of poor quality till then.

At the time, in prose, the great Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar had just started to write strikingly modern Bengali: The great novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1834-94) also started and edited 'Banga Darshan' in 1872 and was in the process of producing his immortal classics. Other proses of significance were 'Alaler Ghare Dulal' by Pyari Chand Mitra (Tek Chand Thakur 1814-83), 'Nil Darpan' by Dinabandhu Mitra (1829-73) and 'Hutom Pechar Naksha' by Kali Prasanna Singha (1840-70). The rise of Bengali prose (1801-56) i.e. before MADHU wrote, was significant, mainly through the efforts of 'Tattwabodhini Sabha's Akshay Kumar Datta and Rajendralal Mitra, under inspiration of Debendra Nath Tagore. The great novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterjee (1889-1950) would be born later.

In drama, Girish Chandra Ghosh (1844-1912) was yet to start. D.L. Roy (1863-1913) was yet to come.

The ever-dazzling contemporary of MADHU—Rabindra Nath Tagore (1861-1941) whose contribution in every aspect of Bengali literature and thoughts, music and dances mapping the total cultural tapestry was just warming up.

In poetry, it was, though, much better. As in every society, poetry

always preceded prose, here in Bengal, there was no exception. Ramayan and Mahabharat had been translated by Krittibas Ojha (1381-1461) and Kashiram Das (16th-17th Century?) respectively. Poet Bharat Chandra Rai Gunakar (1712-60) had written the brilliant 'Mangal Kabya's. Poet Iswar Chandra Gupta or Gupta-Kabi (1812-59) considered, a pioneer to herald the modern Bengali poetic tradition) had written.

"Ke bale Ishwar Gupta, byapto charachar.
Jahar prabhabe prabha pai probhakar".

Prior to them, poet, singer and 'sadhak', Ram Prasad Sen (1718-75) had composed poetry and songs. Earlier Bidyapati (1352-1448) and Chandidas (Dwija and Boru—in 1417?) had written masterpieces, bringing in their wake, innumerable singers, poets, composers and 'sadhak's in the same genre. To name a few, they were Gyandas (1530?), Gobindodas (1531?), Balaram Das, Aulia Manohar Das, Brindaban Das (1507-87), Lochan Das (1523?) [later, 'Charan Kabi' Mukunda Das (1878-1934], Krishna Das Kabiraj (1517-1604), 'Kabi Kankan' Mukunda Ram Chakraborty (1547-?) etc.

MADHU's impact

MADHU appeared in the scenario of Bengali literature like a shooting star and overwhelmed everything and surpassed everyone with his genius, his style and his repertoire. He himself had to make roads in the jungles and hilly areas of Bengali literature to enable himself to walk them,—nay, race through them single-handed without any help, nor support, moral or physical material. (except from his 'Vid').

MADHU took it on himself to re-cast and re-structure the Bengali poetry and show the variegated, colourful, daringly scintillating ways, possibilities and potentialities that Bengali language was capable of,—which no one ever believed or dreamt of.

The span of time period, MADHU could spare for his genius to blossom in Bengali literature, was brief indeed—a mere four years (1858-1862) during which he had to educate himself afresh in Bengali, Sanskrit, history, purans and other scriptures. Earlier, though, he had studied, apart from English, some Latin and Greek.

Later he would learn French and Italian sufficiently well to be able to compose poetry in them.

MADHU's time—Education in Bengal

At MADHU's time, the whole of education system in Bengal was in a turmoil. It was, as if, there was no educational base or system in Bengal then and the English had to teach the illiterates! It was not so at all!! Bengal and the rest of India had systems in place. The existing population had their own ways, which had been obviously different from that of the Westerns. Through the same or similar system, running from time immemorial, countless number of learned, wise and scientific men and women had risen, much before the West could ever think of.

It was the cry of the colonialists of the West that Bengalees/ Indians were uneducated and ignorant 'junglee' natives whom they had to deliver. It was their point of view. They did not care to understand the prevalent system. They only noticed that, if any, it was different in style, content and manner. So, they had to re-introduce and super-impose a totally foreign concept. Western Indologists (Germans mainly) like Max Muller (1823-1900) and Max Weber (1864-1920) who continue to be much respected in India, translated the Vedas (the kind of which they could never come across anywhere!) only superficially, mainly to flaunt their knowledge in Indology and to show that they understood the Vedas and Upanishads, which indians themselves did not know or did not care to remember!

English Education in Bengal

English education started in Bengal in a small way, propelled by the Englishmen of the East India Co., necessitated for requirement of communication, translation and clerical support for administration.

Calcutta was founded in or about 1690 (much after Ahmedabad, which was founded in or about 1410), also much later than Englishmen (1st Englishman in India—Akbar's time—Ralph Fitch-1579). Capt. W. Hawkins landed at Surat with a letter of request from James I to Emperor Jehangir in 1607. Then Sir Thomas Roe

came to Jehangir's court from 1615 to 1618 without getting anything other than permission to set up factories at Gujrat & Agra. Ultimately in 1650, a charter was granted to the English to collect taxes in Bengal. Portugese (Vasco Da Gama at Calicut in 1498) and other Europeans came to India]. Fort Williams was set up in 1712. A college started functioning there in 1800, where even Vidyasagar taught for some time. The first Bengali grammar was said to have been written in 1783/84 by Nathaniel Halhead under the inspiration of Anglo-Welsh philologist, philanthropist and educator—Sir William Jones (1746-94). Later in 1834-42, a Portugese Scholar rewrote the Bengali grammar. Even having accepted this, it could not have happened that Bengali flourished without any grammar which must have existed in some other form, not known or convenient for the Westerns. That Vidyasagar had to write 'Byakaran Kaumudi', a Sanskrit grammar cannot mean that there was no Sanskrit grammar earlier!

Though the first English school was set up in Madras in 1642 to educate English children, the English education for the so-called natives started in right earnest in Calcutta.

When the British took over the administration of Bengal, higher education was confined to study of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian in 'tol's, 'pathsala's and madrasas. The Sanskrit college was set up in 1792 by the British in Benaras. The Christian Missionaries in Calcutta, led by William Carey (1761-1834) established English schools, thus laying the foundation of English education and also Bengali prose literature to some extent. It was taken further by philanthropic and educationist David Hare (1775-1842), who founded the Hindu College (1817) (later converted to Presidency College in 1845) and also Calcutta School Society, Ladies' School for female education; further, Anglo-Irish priest and essayist-educator James Long (1814-87) made great efforts and sacrifices to educate particularly girl children.

1830's Charter Act and budget for spread of science education and 1835's Macaulay's Filtration system of education later,

["We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of

persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect". —Thomas Macauley in 1835] in 1854 Sir Charles Wood introduced a basis for comprehensive education system (Wood's despatch) in British India. Bengal Ladies' Society and School Society (1821) were founded by Miss Cook, supported by Radhakrishna Deb Bahadur, J.D. Bethune (1801-51) Vidyasagar, Justice Shambhu Nath Pandit (1820-67), Raja Kalikrishna Deb and Madan Mohan Tarkalankar. While Lord Macaulay emphasized on limited requirement of English education for benefit of the administration, Lord Dalhousie established the Public Instruction Department for higher education. The first University of India, Calcutta University was founded in 1857. The Metropolitan College was set up by Vidyasagar in 1864. The B.E. College at Sibpur was set up in 1846. Serampore College in 1817, Sanskrit College in 1824, Scotish Church College in 1830, St Xavier's College in 1856 and Calcutta Medical College in 1835

MADHU's advent

MADHU was a born poet. Poetry was his first love, next perhaps to his love for everything Western. In the beginning, he wrote only in English and published in many magazines. His ideals in literature were Homer (850 B.C.) Virgil (70 B.C.), Dante (1256-1321), Milton (1608-74) and Lord Byron (1788-1824). He believed that to be a great poet, he had to be a Christian and go to England. He fled from home and school at the age of nineteen and turned a Christian. His initiator was Rev. K.M. Banerjee, founder of Magazine 'Inquirer'. His love for far-away land of the Albinos and the Blue-Eyed Maids, he dreamt of, was total. He married twice—only white women (He was the first Indian to marry a pure white!). He did visit London, but not to be an English poet but a barrister!

MADHU was proud, self-confident, ambitious and always happy. He attracted a whole horde of friends and admirers around him. He was modest, respectful, cheerful, benevolent and good-natured. His immense pride in his capacity and capability and positive enthusiasm made him hard to match. He had a tremendous capacity to work fiercely hard. Yet he had no time to revise his poems and other

writings! When this is compared with the practices of the best of writers (who, like the great Leo Tolstoy [1829-1910]) would revise each of their works many times over, it is astonishing that he still produced great works of permanence. At times, MADHU had to write three or four pieces together (of course towards end of his life, dictating to different people, while he would be pacing about excitedly in his room). Again he had to write against orders for pecuniary reasons or requests or as challenges. 'Tilottoma Sambhab Kabya' was written as a challenge to Sir Jatindra Mohan Tagore. He had to produce certain books almost overnight.

MADHU's impact

MADHU impacted the Bengali literary scenario with a bang and jolted it off its monotonous, inept and mellow and insipid tune into something thunderous and beyond it, like never before and never repeated thereafter. The phenomenon could not be comprehended by his contemporaries and compatriots. His diversity and innovation in writing was mind-boggling. He wrote epics, poems, lyrics, sonnets (which he introduced to Bengali literature), farcical drama, serious dramas, romantic and patriotic poems, translated from English to Bengali and Bengali to English, and above all, he introduced blank verse into Bengali. He started almost from scratch a new words-thesaurus of noun-verbs and similie system—typically his own. The capability of the Bengali language itself metamorphosed into something sublime with infinite scope for future. MADHU was conscious of his superior ability and unparalleled genius, but he was never ever critical of any other writers in his lifetime.

MADHU's contemporaries

MADHU's great contemporaries were luminaries like [Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1838), who just preceded him], Prince Dwarka Nath Tagore (1794-1846), Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore (1817-1905), Dwijendra Nath Tagore (1840-1920), Gurudeb Rabindra Nath Tagore (1861-1941), Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa-deb (1836-86), Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), [Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), who came later], Pyari Chand Mitra (Tek Chand

Thakur) (1814-1883), Dakhina Ranjan Mukherjee (1814-78), Rishi Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94), Brahmabandhab Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-84), Kali Prasanna Singha (1840-70), Girish Chandra Ghosh, Lalan Faqir (1774-1890), Kishori Chand Mitra (1822-73), Ramtanu Lahiri (1813-98), Kailash Chandra Bose (1827-78), Shibnath Sashtri (1847-1919), Acharya Krishna Kumar Bhatta-charjee (1840-1932), Lal Behary Dey (1824-98), Satyendra Nath Tagore (1842-1923), Rev. Krishna Mohan Banerjee (1813-85), a prominent member of Henri Louis Vivian Derozio's (1809-31) (who came in Calcutta in 1828) Young Bengal Group, with its illustrious members, for supporting rebel against conservatism and encouraging patriotism among Indians and starting Gyananweshar Patrika, Mathematician Radhanath Sikdar (1813-70) who estimated the height of Everest under his boss Everest and many more. His contemporaries were legendary giants, each unique in his own sphere.

These men were in the midst of the so-called Bengali Renaissance (1750-1915). Whether the period could be named 'Renaissance' is a matter of opinion, as renaissance implies 'rising again', the way it happened in Europe in 1430-1600 after a millennium or more gap of Dark Age and Medieval Times after the Greek and Roman glory. None the less, Bengal too was once great earlier, when it achieved peaks of wealth, prosperity, trade and shipping with neighbouring countries, business, education, arts and industries, imbibing adventures and bravery continuously for hundreds of years—also a millennium or more back. Bengalees fought wars, founded Kingdom outside India and set up diplomatic relations. Even earlier, it is said that the Greek Macedonian hero, Alexander the Great, who wanted to conquer the then-known world, but being afraid to face Bengali might, (with thousands of elephants) decided to go back without crossing the Bipasha (a myth?). Bengal, including Tamralipto found a mention in the Mahabharata. Swami Vivekananda found writings in Bengali in Buddha Shrines at Penang and Canton in the east, while he was on his way to America. Bengal was the grannery and wealth-suppliers to the Mughal Empire to support its luxuries and continued series of wars, but who could never really control Bengal directly.

"Adam Smith (1723-90) thought that India in general, Bengal in particular, was one of the most prosperous regions of the globe,..." (The Wealth of Nations, 1878).

"The competitiveness of quality of Indian exports was a cause of concern for native European Manufacturers and in Britain in particular before the establishment of British rule in India..." Amartya Sen, 2013.

"During the same period the real wages of Indian labour as compared to that in economically advanced regions of Europe, were not lower; in fact it was higher..." Amartya Sen, 2013.

It is history that the 'Glorious Revolution of 1688' in Europe was followed by the 'London Financial Revolution'. The British financed their war efforts in Europe and against other European Traders in India and elsewhere, with profits made in India (mainly Bengal), thereby first ousting their European rivals and then ultimately replacing the Mughal Empire. India was used as the British launching hub to produce and distribute drugs for illegal export to China, leading to 'Opium war'. Later they financed the 1st Afghan war (1839-42) using the profits of exploitation of the Bengali labour.

While speaking on 'renaissance' of Bengal, the author does in no way belittle the Oneness of India as a whole! India was 'India' much much before the Westerners landed on Indian shores, or they "unified" India by starting the railway lines, starting with Bombay to Thane in 1853 or by overpowering and controlling the then Rulers, Princes, Rajas and Maharajas or by super-imposition of English Education or by introduction of uniform civil code. India was one and 'more than one' eons before all these events. The so-called unification of India was nobody's handiwork. India existed from the Himalayas to Sinhal and from Sind to Burmah in just oneness. The oneness if India was in religion, value system, virtuousness and one sublime culture, which pervaded the whole of India.

India appeared to fall back and lose in race when pitted against different alien, materialistic and agnostic cultures. As Indian rulers were not united, (how could they be, with such diversity of languages and sub-cultures and localized habits and superstitions? India cannot be compared with Germany or France or Switzerland; India is more

than Europe with its multiple languages and cultures; and could Europe be one?) the outsiders could easily 'divide and rule', and particularly, when they were driven simply by materialistic objectives; unlike Indians who throughout India's length and breadth and even when Indians travelled abroad, were driven by spiritualistic pursuits almost single-mindedly. But who knows, in ultimate analysis, what will prevail, spirit or matter? According to Swami Vivekananda, it is fifty-fifty. Sri Aurobindo proclaimed hundred percent in favour of spirit. Western philosophers are divided, each surpassing the other in verbiage—catharsis!

Back to Bengal, Bengal was a favourite hunting ground for Maratha-Bargis ['Bargir Hangama' (1741-51)] when they ransacked villages after villages around Calcutta and elsewhere in South Bengal. It was more severe and more devastating than ill-fated famines of Bengal in 1741 ('Chhiattorer Mannantar') and in 1771. Mothers would sing lallaby to children:

"Chhele ghumalo para juralo Bargi elo deshe!..."

Canals called Maratha Canals had to be dug (presently lower and upper circular Roads—AJC Bose and APC Roads) around Calcutta to protect it from Bargis. These Bargis were driven away by Alibadri Khan and ditches, filled up at British time! The Maratha leaders were Bhaskar Pandit under Raghunath Bhonsle.

It is well chronicled that there was a time, when Bengalees were preferred as teachers and professors in most parts of India. Bengali brides were sought after by the Kings/Princes from Pataliputra/Mysore/Mangalore to Kashmir. Bengali past connot be belittled,—be it closest past or furthest.

As a result of spread of education in India, the first two female graduates of entire British Empire were Bengalees: Kadambini Ganguli (1861-1923) and Chandramukhi Bose (1860-1944). The 1st female aircraft pilot of India was a Bengalee. The reason is not that Bengalees had the first European contact;—the reason must be somewhere else.

The rise of pantheon of great men of achievement during the nineteenth and early twentieth century's, cannot be traced, nor compared to the above. But the appearance of so many stalwarts

within a short span of time is stupendous by any account. There is no parallel in history of any region or race or society, which produced such talents in such quick succession. A deeper research into the subject might be inspiring to the present defeatist-minded Bengalees.

MADHU's patriotism

True, MADHU did not take any interest or play any role, in Nationalist/political activity, though Bengal's heyday of courageous revolutionary activity started right before 1850; nor did he take part in any social reformation movement. Those were not his fields. Everyone is not expected to do everything. Nevertheless, MADHU was no less patriotic; whoever can forget his immortal poem: "Rekho ma dasere mone e minoti kori pade..." expressing intense patriotic feelings?

The intense patriotic National movements would come later with A.O. Hume, who addressed letters in 1883 to graduates of Calcutta University enthusing them to participate in struggles for Social causes and also Surendra Nath Banerjee's (1845-1925) and Bepin Ch. Pal's (1858-1932) efforts to create the necessary societal stir.

MADHU'S time—historical perspective

A historical perspective of MADHU's time follows:

During his time, elsewhere in the world, Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was creating immortal literature in Russia, Feodor Dostoivsky (1821-81) also of Russia was writing furiously against Social injustices, Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931) of USA was inventing copiously modern essential equipment and gadgets like electric bulbs, phonographs etc., Hans Christian Anderson (1805-75) of Denmark was writing 'The Ugly Duckling', Lewis Carrol (1832-98) had just completed 'Alice In The Wonderland'. Other contemporary eminent writers/thinkers were: Mark Twain (1835-1910), Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94), Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Arthur Connan Doyle (1859-1930), Alfred Tennyson (1809-92), Charles Dickens (1812-70), Emily Bronte (1818-48), John Stewart Mill (1806-73), David Henry Thoreau (1817-62), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), Walt Whitman (1819-92), Ralph Waldo

Emerson (1803-82), Edgar Alan Poe (1809-49) and Victor Hugo (1802-86).

At MADHU's time, one of the greatest men ever born: philosopher, humanist, sociologist, political economist and revolutionary: Karl Marx (1818-83) was toiling fourteen hours a day in the British Museum Library, researching to finish his monumental work 'Das Kapital', while his family of wife and three children were starving and languishing in malnutrition and disease in a one-room flat, somewhere in London. Still only part I of his masterpiece could be published during his life time; second part was published later.

Perhaps the greatest man of science who lived during MADHU's time was Charles Darwin (1809-1882), who conceived his most revolutionary, most audacious and most anti-Christian 'Theory of Natural Selection' in 1838, after his 5 years voyage of the Beagle. His scientific excursions were in 1826-30, 1831-36 and finally in 1837-43. It was a discovery which is yet to be surpassed in its magnitude and far-reaching repercussions.

MADHU's life

MADHU's eventless, though pathos-filled, life-history may be divided into five segments:

(i) He was born in an affluent family at Sagardari in Jessore District, on the banks of the river Kapotaksha. His father was a renowned lawyer Raj Narayan Datta, mother Jahnabi Debi. His education was at Khiderpore School (Started when he was 7 years old, as he arrived in Calcutta) and Hindu Junior School (1833). His schoolmates were: eminent men like Bhudeb Mukherjee (1827-94), Rajendralal Mitra (1822-91), Rajnarayan Bose (1826-1909), Gaur Das Basak (1826-94) among others. He was the brightest of all. He wrote many articles, poems, essays in various magazines like 'Gyananweshan', 'Bengal Spectator', 'Literary Blossom', 'Comet' etc.—all in English.

In 1843 when MADHU was barely 19, he converted into Christianity and took the name of Michael. He entered the Bishops College, where he learned Greek, Latin and Sanskrit languages and literatures. He was a very quick learner. When his father stopped

the support, he was forced to leave college and abruptly sailed for Madras in 1856.

(ii) In Madras, MADHU taught in schools, practised journalism, worked as editor of some journals and wrote poems. He wrote 'Captive Ladie' and 'The Visions Of The Past' in the nom-de-plume of 'Timothy Penpoem'. He married Rebecca Mactays in 1848 and after separation, Henrietta Sophia White in 1856, both whites, while in Madras. With Rebecca, he had two sons and two daughters.

(iii) Learning about his father's death, MADHU returned to Calcutta, followed by Henrietta in 1856. In Calcutta also, he was extremely poor and had to do some odd jobs, like editing a journal 'Hindoo Patriot' for some time and petty clerical jobs. Being forced by his erstwhile friends in Calcutta and realising that he would never be recognised as an English poet, he turned to writing in Bengali in 1858, for which he had to learn very fast and work hard indeed.

First (a) MADHU wrote in English 'Ratnabali play' 1858, which he wrote in Bengali also. Thereafter, no one could stop him. He wrote:

(b) 'Sharmistha' in Bengali and English, 1859; (c) 'Ekei ki bole Sabhyata', 1858; (d) 'Buro Shalikher Ghare Roe'; (e) 'Padmabati play' (introduced blank verse for the first time in Bengali); (f) 'Krishna Kumari Natak'; (g) 'Tilottama Sambhab Kabya', 1860; (h) 'Brajangana Kabya', 1860/61; (i) 'Meghnad Badh Kabya', 1861; (j) 'Birangana Kabya', 1862; (k) Translation into English 'Nil Darpan Natak', 1862; (l) 'Chaturdash Padi Kabitabali', 1865 (while abroad) etc. In addition, he had many un-finished works to his credit.

(iv) MADHU recovered a part of his parental property and sailed for England in 1862, by when he lost his mother.

(v) MADHU came back from London in 1867 as a barrister. He died a pitiable death, a broken man in a public hospital, just 3 days after Henrietta's death in 1873 in the same hospital, leaving a few children including Sharmistha, who was by then married.

This 5th part of MADHU's brief life was almost sterile, as he was riven by extreme penury and he had picked up the bad habit of drinking. Although during the period, Vidyasagar provided MADHU with some monthly allowances, so that he could devote his time for

Bengali literature, but that was not to be; nothing could save him! Of course this was no reason why he should have been shunned by his erstwhile other countrymen. His epitaph, a self-written proud sonnet, an immortal creation, stands, in a corner of a Calcutta crematorium. Thus all that he achieved was compressed into a mere 4-years span.

MADHU's literature and 'Brajangana Kabya'

MADHU's creation of literature had no repetition. Each one of his works was unique in itself, distinctly different from the other. He experimented, thrust forward with fierce energy and speed and with such courage and conviction that there was no holding back. The entire Bengali literary field was simply overwhelmed. No one could produce such varied styles and new prosodies, such heroic and emphatic stanzas in Bengali till and since then.

MADHU had written 'Brajangana Kabya'—a lyrical epic in between his bold and stylish versions of 'Tilottama Sambhab Kabya' and 'Meghnad Badh Kabya'. No one could imagine then and even now people would wonder, how the same poet, making such rich, heroic and dramatic, at times harsh and extravagant, poems of the like of 'Meghnad Badh Kabya' could produce such lilting, tender poems of beauty, contained in "Brajangana Kabya'. No wonder, it was justly said by scholars that even if MADHU did not produce anything other than 'Brajangana Kabya', he would have been equally famous and Bengalees would remember him to this day, as they do other lyrical poems of that genre.

For the relevance of Krishna in the modern age, one must consider the vast majority of the population of Bengal/India, who know too well, more than anything else, Krishna as an incarnation of Vishnu. From time immemorial and in particular from the time of the 'Bhakti era' of Sri Chaitanya (1455-1534), Tukaram (1577-1650), Guru Nanak (1469-1539), Meera Bai (1498-1557), Kabir (1450-1518), Tulsidas (1497-1623), Surdas (1478-1573) and other 'Guru's of the contemporary period, Sri Krishna kirtan and bhajan and many other forms of devotional songs, dances and folk lores have been the staple food of entertainment and culture of the masses.

To Indians, it matters not, if Krishna was a historical figure. They just invoked him in time of need, sang His praises in the poetic languages and worshipped Him. Rishi Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, through his research, indicated the age of Mahabharat and Krishna to be about 4000 years old. India's history is oral history; not written down the Western way. In fact, what is history, but what is known, whatever may be the source? Whoever knows the truth of history? Once past, the events become history, which can never be known with certainty. It is the angle of vision, the personal bias, the matter of opinion or the explanations provided and that is history, oriental or occidental!

Interest in translating 'Brajangana Kabya'

The translator's interest was drawn to MADHU's 'Brajangana Kabya', early in translator's life, because of its sheer beauty, simplicity and as it is of totally variant nature from the poet's usual creations. The translator was charmed by noting, what all still could be said about 'Krishna' and 'Radha', which were not said by his numerous illustrious predecessors. MADHU's contribution in 'Brajangana Kabya' could be viewed from another angle. His study of 'Padabali' literature, then available, including of Jaideb and Chandidas, made him think deeper and he embellished his poems with the wider knowledge of and gleanings from Western literature which he imbibed and processed in his anglicized bent of mind.

Translator's Note

A point must be made to allow for such a 'Note' by the translator and that too such long! History teaches, but it is an incomplete teacher. Without analysis, history is a limpid mass. History's conclusions are uncertain. Conclusions depend on unforeseen and unpredictable variants. Still the society has to discuss and debate to preclude unnecessary and untimely collapses. An attempt has been made in the 'Note' to discuss MADHU's time and point finger to the incongruities and at the same time and beyond it, enthusing to cogitate against such societal deficiencies in Bengali culture, which is despite destined to rise again.

Apologia

The translator apologizes that the translation was actually done decades before the present time, as work of love, during spare hours; but the note is prepared now for daring to publish 'Brajangana Kabya'.

Thanks

To Mr. H.K. Bagchi, BME (Hons.), M.R.I.N.A.C.Eng (Lond), F.I.E (India) renowned naval architect and engineer of yester years,—though an engineer, still an avid, no non-sense connoisseur of literature, English or Bengali, in his spare time,—for providing the inspiration, though he might wonder, how!

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Brajangana Kabya

PART I: **SEPARATION**

1. SOUND OF THE BAMBOO FLUTE

1.1

Under the Kadamba tree
plays a bamboo-flute
the Dancing Radhika—Charmer.

Let's hurry, mate!
to see to heart's content
my Hari, the Brojo—glamour.
I am the thirsty swallow,
when I hear the cloud's roar
how do I spend the patient hour?

Fie, my honour! Fie, the lineage!
My mind's boat is in a rage;
let's go and float at His feet in love-water.

1.2

The swan floats, friend, in my eyes' sliders
in the lotus-pond
ignoring the love-bond;—
with what excuse the lotus hides—
—submerged in water?
Whosoever loves Whomsoever,
to Him goes he ever!

Who violates God's rules of love—so kind?
Should rules be violated,
the Tiger will hit the uninitiated
Who can resist in tri-verse memory's grind?

1.3

Hark! again sounds the flute,
Captivating the mind's fears—
Murari's loot!
The gentle Malay fills the ears!
'am Shyam's slave astute!
When thunder roars,
the pea-hens dance in chorus;
why can't I overcome shyness and shine?
The lightning flickers immense,
frequently and with gladness,
why will then Radha leave her Lord and pine?

1.4

Flowers in bloom
in the enchanting gloom,
where the Jewel-King remains.
Seeing my Shyam, the Moon,
the world disintegrates soon
in snares of flowers' system!
Shame! Fie Him!
Six seasons are wreathing Him!
How does my Beloved desire other women?
Let's go and find Him soon,
lest we should lose Madhab the Moon.
Does a snake live without its Crown-Gem?

1.5

The stream meanders place to place,
searching the sea in a race

without stopping in its motion;
when moon is in the sky,
with glorious nocturn beams from high,
my Love-Ocean,—
my Lover at my den!
can I live without Him? Oh what an option!
My Moon the Gem
my fate remains the same;
and separated in dark am I, Boo! The logic's pretention!

1.6

Under the Kadamba tree,
Radhika's Friend plays the flute;
Let's hurry and visit
our hearts' Glory- this very minute
at Gokul's—Jewel the Treat!
Madhu says, "Brojo women,
"pray at the crimson feet again,
"and go wherever Madhusudan bids you to meet;
"waste not the rosy youth,
"Lest it should rot uncouth;
"at night, you will sip honey, if persevere right."

2. RAIN-BEARING CLOUDS

2.1

See, dear friend, how glorious is the sky!
The wind carries flavours,
lightnings too flash,
wonders in sweet-speed, love-spluttered high!
Rainbow in colour,
riding the clouds, dear,
dazzles the Love-God—a jewel-bedecked sky!

2.2

The stars close eyes in shame,—
the love-fest is on,
clouds in intoxication,
the Lover with Love-God—the earth's aflame!
the lightning is fickle,
the Lord is playful,
frequently embracing pleases and tame!

2.3

Pea-hens dance and cackle in happiness,
seeing in Brojo-bower,
Radha with her Power together;
as danced all Gokul-belles in grace;
how thirsty the she-swallows fly
roads are empty, dead and dry;
but bubbling and gurgling are the clouds in race.

2.4

Oho! Where is Shyam—the rain-bearing cloud?
Your darling lightning
how sad, who is crying!
Did You forget Radha, You once charmed so proud?
Come, put on the jeweled scepter,
come, illuminate the world ever,
As the Sun is Uday-mountain-bound.

2.5

Seeing your unusual figure, my Gem,
disheartened, the sun-god
will move out, cry and applaud,
throwing arms, will flee in shame!
Then at day-break again
will rise with a smile in the rain,
and the earth will be happy in Radhika's name.

2.6

Gokul dames will dance as lotus dances,
with gentle Malay breeze,
lapped on lovely pond's crèche,
with sweet tinkle music of anklet's prances.
You seat me with You on a bed of flowers,
and 'am Your slave ready with cheers;
You may be intoxicated with new-clouds; while' am motionless!

2.7

Oh Hope! Would you be fruitful still?
Will you regain Him,—
your life dares , Whom?
You may have lost your Lord; will get back- why rile?
Madhu says, "Oh maid chaste,
"hope is all that brightens the fate;
"no mirage satisfies a thirsty soul!"

3. ON JAMUNA BANK

3.1

Oh river! tell me clearly!
What do you say with low prattle and murmur?
If without the sea,
your heart does cry,
Oh river! Open your mind to Radhika's tears?
Don't you know, dear, that she too is lonely?

3.2

You are the daughter of the Sun, under cloud's caring.
on the mountain in a shelter of gold;
of regal birth you are,
as blossom- born is flavour,
why then are you shy of Radhika? Behold!
Don't you know, she too was born—a princess darling?

3.3

Come friend, let us two sit down in solitude!
let us console our mind, one to the other;
dear river, useless to roam
on your bank, all alone!
I am an unfortunate guest at your door;
My lashes are wet with tears;— 'am a destitute!

3.4

I have thrown away all my ornaments—
gems, jewels, diamonds – all embellishments,

torn all garlands,
just to comfort heart-burns;
'have applied ashes on my body and sandal-scent!
Has she any desire for my worldliness?

3.5

Look at the red spot on my fore head,
I still maintain it, as I have my husband;
but it's like flame of fire
at hair-parting, Oh my dear!
To conceal all these matters, my life is dead!

3.6

Oh moon-faced friend! Come near, sit on my skirt;
sit like LuxmiDebi, perching on lotus seat,
I would hold you near
and cry, 'am an orphan, dear!
let me forget the pain, oh the river,- my pet!
Come, let us sit, two of us, on this deserted mat.

3.7

I am amazed, I entreat you in so many ways;
still, you care not to listen, oh my own,
hearing all this and seeing Radha's luckless ruin,
you too hate Radha, oh, I groan;
oh river! Is this proper on your part? 'Am amazed!

3.8

Alas! Why do I blame you, oh lucky one?
Radha is beggar now, you a queen,
a consort of Madhab and Ganga, a companion;
He bestows on you, with open hands, all that's fine,
Whenever He lives in ocean, with Him you are the one.

3.9

Whenever He comes at night with a broad smile on,
you decorate self with charms and ornaments;
Stars are your garlands and boon;
on crown is your moon,
flowers from wrist band, you - charmer the best,
and you run to your Lord, noisily along.

3.10

Alas! Who else's there in Brojo for Radha's care?
Who feels Radha's pains among proper-clan?
The day is over,
The sun sets there,
though the world is immersed in dark,
Whoever feels pain, when lilies wane?

3.11

Young friend, high you are, low am I now;
but when one is not in sorrow, seeing others in pain,
one's birth is worthless
and that one's a rogue, no less!
Madhu says. "For nothing, you cry insane!
"Whoever has kindness in heart, will show again!"

4. PEA-HEN

4.1

Pea-hen, why are you sad, perching on branches?
Finding not Shyam the Moon,
does your heart cry so soon?
You too are in distress!
Oh! Who does not love
Radhika's Love?
Oh bird! Whose eyes refuse to cool, seeing the Moon-face?

4.2

Come bird, let us embrace each other
and think silently;
you have rested your heart
in the new cloud-burst,
can it be yours plainly?
And will Radha achieve Radha's Lover?
Think, meditate, you will get Him ultimately!

4.3

The cloud creates loveliness;
when it roars and riles in the sky,
the golden rainbow
decorates in gems' show,
climbs the height's ace!
Putting on lightning,
gold and gems shining,
like trees put on creepers with blossoms and dress.

4.4

But think a while, girl!
Beauty of my Shyam, incomparable in three worlds;
oh! who can deny
that sweetness and beauty?
oh! pea-hen girl!
Whoever has witnessed Radhika's Lover in the world,
they have known why Radha opts to be a disgraced pearl.

4.5

Oh pea-hen! Why are you sad, perching on branches?
Finding not the Moon,
is your heart marooned?
Are you too in distress?
Oh! Who does not adore Madhusudan?
Madhu says. " Whatever you say is true and bon!"

5. THE EARTH

5.1

Oh! The Earth,—the original mother Earth!
You are the kindest, the universe knows,
when Ravan the deca-headed foe
burnt in fire Janaki the beauty's rose,
It's you who saved her, dear,
you are the one to tear up the heart's rigour,
and take Sita in arms, protect her, you the snake-charmer!

5.2

Oh Earth! You too are in grief- in Radha's separation;
Why are you in anger with her stagnation?
Burning in grief's fire, this luckless
suffers insufferably Shyam-less-ness.
Lucky one, how don't you mind Radha's pains?
Burns the unfortunate!
Who consoles her at any rate?
Oh season's breeder! How cruel your laws and omens!

5.3

Fire burns in the heart of Shomi trees;
is that the fire of separation,—Earth's mystery?
Were that true, the woods would have been lost
in the heat of life- the youthfulness most.
Luckless I burn
and look, the Earth I spurned,
Just as the forest aglow with interned frost!

5.4

You are aware, Earth,
you too are in love with the God of Seasons
when He shows up,
how well are you dressed up,
as Rati dresses for her Love-god,
dazzling with the hair,
hundreds of jewels and flowers,
think of her sorrow of separation, my priceless abode!

5.5

People may say, Radha is disgraced;
but why do you hate her, your highness?
you are endless,
lucky with water and jewels
both gifted by God to you;
still, honey, you're in race too?
Shyam is my life's God,
whom have I lost, oh God,
Are you not still unhappy for my unhappiness?

5.6

On Earth! Tell me how I can
console my foolish life, vain;
'Am Radhika, teach me secrets of all—
how you live, what you think, losing your spring-Soul;
Says Madhu, " Oh beauty! Patience please!
"Honey to Earth, in time, He will release."

6. ECHO

6.1

Who are you to re-sound like Radha's lament?
Who are you, the chaste one, to call in wilderness,
as if wretched Radha is calling Madhab?
Come, tell me without fear, you fearless sob;
who is not bound in this world by Shyam's Love-embrace?

6.2

The lotus dedicates her body and soul to the charming moon,
The moon-rays come to moon, pining for honey and passion.
The night advances and smiles, gem-inlaid,—no malice.
Is the lotus angry seeing all this?
The bird and the night- both are her sins.

6.3

Now I know, whom you call, heaven's girl and assert;
you live in hills and forests, oh beauty, you do flirt;
and all the while you frolic, you fun-lover, you must;
you have no body, only the voice, who doesn't know you?
Haven't you come only for Radha and only a clown?

6.4

I know, mine own, you too love Shyam, my Gem;
hearing Murari's flute-play,
you come dancing and say,
and to learn Shyam's songs in this bower,

"Radha, Radha,"—Hari called whenever,
"Radha, Radha",—you too called, you beauteous flower!

6.5

In by-gone days, you could hear sky full of music
below the Nandan grove,
in the Brindaban trough.
That Brojo today is lonely and screams abound;
She is my bird, and this is where her night is found!

6.6

Come, my friend, let's call Radha's Pleasure, both together;
if this slave's voice to Madhab appear,
he may not hear mine,
but will to yours, listen;
hundreds of birds may invoke spring, the king of seasons;
but when cuckoos call, He comes running, He wins.

6.7

Reply me not, but, my lady-love, tell Him as I say,
I know you, a fun-loving girl,
you're busy with frolics and all;
but won't you today leave this play?
Madhu says. "Echo is always like this!
"cries and makes cry, laughs and makes laugh,
oh! you Madhab's miss!"

7. DAWN

7.1

On golden Udai-peak, oh beauty, you peeped!
the lotus closes its eye,
but birds sing happily,
he and she in the bower,
the bees sing and wander;
intimate you are with the lotus and comprehend;
you are the one, daily to shift, its very best friend,

7.2

You showed the way to the partridge and life's kernel;
so please lead her to Brojo habitat, where Hari prevails,
today albeit Radha is shy and blind,
weeping all the while, body and mind,
heal her of blindness please, oh you golden she-male!

7.3

Dawn! Night time bristling with hopes, I was in oblivion,
'thought, the morn will end the night, by flooding Brojo with sun,
hoped to get back my life's soul in the bower
and see, under Kadamba tree, Radha's Entertainer.

7.4

My girl, dress up the flower-maids with gems and rings,
why don't you bring gentle breeze for dancing with them?
why don't you get for Radha's pleasure,—all the same?

where is He, Who is the ornament of Radha?
Get Him quick, dress Him up for gloomy Radha.

7.5

Your forehead is adorned with a dazzling gem,
reflecting pure rays;
a belle may adorn her head with garland-stays;
but the King of the country is Brojo's Jewel;
Madhu opines, "Oh the Brojo belle,
"Sri Madhusudan is the only precious diadem,"

8. FLOWERS

8.1

Why do you pluck so many flowers,
filling the vase, oh my own!
when the night is young,
covered with clouds prolong,
garlands of stars—it can put on;
what use needling
blossoms dazzling, oh Brojo woman?

8.2

Brojo ladies!
Then why do you deprive
forest's creepers alive
of their robes of wonder?
Trees are friends
of Radha's more, and of none-the-less;
Radha- the spectrum of specters.

8.3

Oh my ladies, whom will you decorate?
with the garlands you needle?
Do you think, Banamali is still dancing under Tamal?
The charmer cuckoo has broken the cage,
has fled; and it's dismal!

8.4

Does the lovely flute still play in the bower?
Does the Brojo-sky still
Nectar owner's laughter fill?
Does the Brojo-lotus weep still in Brojo's shelter?

8.5

When cruel Akrur came in Brojo-habitat,
why couldn't he be
drowned in the Jamuna-sea?
Why didn't you kill the cruel messenger
by some trick of sheer power?

8.6

The Gem of Brojo is but worthless; He took my heart!
He is Brojo's enemy,
destroyed all and stole honey!
Madhu, the poet, assures still,
"Brojo belles surely will
get Sri Madhusudan in entirety".

9. MALAY BREEZE

9.1

I know, you are from the Malay mountains.
You are the Malay wind;
birds are singing,
as does goddess of learning,
Nandan bower is of musical mind;
the flower ladies
better than lotus is,
who nurses you like Rati to Madan did.

9.2

Why do you float now in Brojo,
Oh! gentle wind?
Go on the lap of the pond, raise ripples with breeze so fond,
loughing lotuses with love-full mind;
the sun of Brojo has left Brojo,
the Son of Brojo is setting the sun blind.

9.3

The lilies will gladden Your heart
with flames of fragrance;
has Radha a gift richer than Your glance?
Oh Lord! She is sorrowful,—
Swims in eyes tearful;
go soon where cuckoos raise songs, dear!
Radha in Separation does grieve in the grove, at once!

9.4

Still, if you, lucky one, are sorry in mind
for this wretched lady—pale,
go there quick- foot,
where can Brojeswar loot,
go where you will, well
find Brojo the jewel,
Radha's wailings be carried, where Shyam is;
tell Him, without Whom, Radha is dying in hell!

9.5

Go, mighty one, where Banamali is;
if the wicked peaks
obstruct your speeds,
Oh wind! tell them of my entreaties;
if the large trees
declare war and siege,
go mauling them with thunderous ease.

9.6

Seeing you, if the beauteous brooks
try to trap you, please—
Lose not self in them, nor worry,
you are Radha's emissary!
look not at the flower-like young ladies;
they may splash your mind
with secrets to engage and bind;
overlook their tricks, go quickly and arise.

9.7

Oh wind! don't mistake dews for tears!
If the cuckoos on the boughs
Call you with quintet of songs,
Leave that bower proud and tough;
think of Radha's sorrowfulness

and reject your own happiness;
great is—whoever is sorry in others' sorrow and grief.

9.8

When you reach Radhika's Lover
as my emissary,
announce at once: Gokul cries
for Shaym's rise,
carry with you Radha's tears, - how she is in sorrow;
being self a woman mere,
'am too shy to add any more.
Madhu volunteers to carry all messages pre-morrow.

10. SOUND OF FLUTE-PLAYING

10.1

Who does, my friend, play the flute
in gentle tune in this golden grove?
Ask him to stop; hearing that sound—
fire burns doubly in my mind's wound;
why stoke the fire with oblation?
doesn't it, as ever, our lives burn?

10.2

Does the cuckoo sing after the spring ends
from the bough, concealed amid the leaves?
silently fly to its restful nest?
The flute's sound in the groove's leaves!
Oh! is it still, its notes singing?
not finding Shyam, isn't it crying?

10.3

It is said, friend, once Indra in anger
clips off the feathers of the mountains
and many a cliff shelters in water,
those are the peaks of the cliffs,
blocking and destroying the sea-faring ships.

10.4

Who knows how mounts of separation
enter the sea of love?

Whose ship of love faces termination
and is sunk under water above,
as the hunter traps the birds;
now I know, the mounts of separation—sad!

10.5

Oh my beloved! What use remembering
the lost happiness? Can't get again;
can one get smell of blossoms drying?
Aren't you forgetting memory is the main;
think of the King of honey and suffer again,
Madhu says, "Oh Brojo belles, suffer the pain."

11. TWILIGHT

11.1

Aha! where is the cowherd – Head?
Gokul's cows are grief-struck, morose,
as they hear not the flute's sound,
So, silently and slowly enter the cow-shed;
dusk time it is, where is Madhab, the Head?

11.2

Approaches the dark night,
on boughs the she- partridge,
perching lone, crying frigid,
as Radha in separation weeps in fright,
still at end of night
the beauty smirks right
but will the night ever end and be bright?

11.3

Look up, see, the sun is up,
it entertains the people of the earth;
it is of lotus and night's mirth;
charming lilies beautifully laugh;
the tarnished moon soothes the eyes,
the unstained Moon of Brojo steals our heart.

11.4

Ah! dews- the nights' showers,
wet not the blooms' petals,

waste not in Brojo your pearls;
see, Radha's tears trickle boundless;
tonight they will sprinkle in Brojo – all the petals.

11.5

Body is painted with sandal paste,
decorated with flowers,
no shame—you, Burgler,
amusing the damsels, the jovial Humourist?
without you, this separation is tasteless and horrid,
whom will Brojo- dames worship for love's Cupid?

11.6

Oh the gentle southern breeze,
you are a dealer of fragrance,
now leave this Brojoland this instance!
Where fire burns,
could sandal paste be-smeared?
go back to the frenzied lotus dance
and relieve the bodies of tired ladies in trance.

11.7

Go, you King of southern wind,
don't you carry on and amuse
the five notes of cuckoos!
today all young ladies of Brojo are crying,
Madhu says " Brojo beauties, no use crying,
"surely Sri Madhusudan will be yours, not otherwise!"

12. GOBARDHAN MOUNTAIN

12.1

I bow at your feet, you King of mountains,
I, Radha, a woman, a mere milkmaid of Gokul,
I am in shame, my Lord, only a house I maintain,
how can I relate and lay bare
my heart's pangs to share?
Why did I come to your house insane?
But at the end of the day,
who does not know why,
without meeting Whom,
the lotus dries up soon,
at Whose separation, burns the flowers of mountain!

12.2

Oh mountain, the Flute-Player, who is the Sun of Brojo,
left Brojo and gone!
I may not be gracious
like a bewitching lotus,
but I worship Shyam, - 'am Radha unfortunate;
like a lotus does to its own fate,
having lost such treasure,
Oh mountain, I've come to weep at your feet.
Where is Shyam mine
The King of virtue and shine?
I am a serpent without the jewel- kit.

12.3

You are the King, bedecked with forests and creepers,
which shine as your crown on your head;
your garments are embellished with flowers and brocade,
lovely mild breeze, as hued as of silver made
a modesty scarf on your crest;
Your hand holds a wooden stick,
a specter, my Hero the Maverick;
Your body is ever
adorned grey with culture and cultivar,
infinite grandeur, who doesn't worship you, with lowered head?

12.4

Chaste women, she- deer are your maids,
The birds are your sweet songsters;
all the forest women love you,
oh pinnacle, the head-view;
all the beauties of the world are subservient,
the wondrous universe is in your bondage, are passionate;
the sun in the day
oh Lord, holds the bay;
at dusk, night with stars are your maids;
now Radha prays for your shelter, oh Shyam,
She begs your love, instead.

12.5

When gods are angry, oh globe- supporter,
and rains the Brojodham torrents of doom,
when hundreds of dreadful
clouds so fearful,
roar and swallow up the sun in tear,
as a tiger tears up an elephant, dear!
as Hari protected you
like an umbrella new,
how can Brojo forget Brojeswar?

Brojo submerged in Radha's tears,
but where is the Flute-Player?

12.6

Oh placid One, don't think Radha is shameless;
the pain is unbearable and how do I brace?
'am a family dame, drowning in the sea seamless!
So I pray at Your feet,
protect me, Your Highness;
A pedigreed woman me,
to protect my dignity;
but how can my mind in sense
understand such a mess?
Madhu says, " Hang on with modesty,
" pray on, oh lady!
"to Sri Madhusudan's edicts."

13. THE SHE- BIRD-SARIKA

13.1

Look at the bird, friend, in the cage,
always restless,
at times it sings and cries sad
as stupid, as if she is mad,
like in water, reflection of brightness;
never could I think, friend, how to free her,
breaking the cage to fly off glad.

13.2

One in sorrow only, can feel other's sorrow,
let me tell you that!
Today I know the bird's mind fully;
'am too a prisoner, in Brojo lonely,
like the restless bird,
the flower garden is sad;
Me thinks Radha too has none to follow.

13.3

Oh my forest-roving friend of the vernal!
Is your friendship with the bird only formal?
you caught her somehow, incarcerated dumb,
how could you assume now she would remain patiently calm?
seeing the fate of the she-bird, friend, intensely sad,
holding back Radha in earth's prison—too bad!

13.4

'Beseech you, set free the she-bird and be kind,
leave her, let her off, let her laughter be the wind,
let the heart be happy,
let her be snappy,
Oh my kind lady! Heal the pain of the she-bird.
Open the chain, free Radha—my entreaty!

13.5

Oh mine own!
this mean world is dark in Radha's eyes,
how still do you grip her in darkness' vise?
Can a fish live on without water,
leave her, let her go to her Preserver,
Let Him be the One, her character-Assassinator.

13.6

She who loves, my friend,
what use to her are pedigree and character?
Callous she is, owing her love to Shyam
Radhika is devoted to Shyam, the Master;
of little use her worldly ware?
Madhu says, " Forget family and proceed askance,
"to Sri Madhusudan, the only Abode of significance."

14. FLAMING FLOWERS

14.1

Look at the flowers I have put on my head,
these flowers, could paint Shyam's crown red,
The earth created petals out of curiosity;
with such bright hues and cute-y;
in anger I called names and took them off, no fears!
Why will the world use my flaming flowers?

14.2

Look at the pearls on the blooms' petals,
Oh dear! in disguise of dewdrops, these are my tears!
Taking Krishna's crown gem,
I cried eyeing the same,
all alone lonely I cried,
wet my eyes with tears,
the tears are on petals,
faking and looking wondrous; dazzles.

14.3

Listen, my young lady, getting these gems of blossoms,
I lost my head, still remembering as in dreams,
saw Heaps of Beauty,
on sweet Lips—the flute-e
under the Kadam tree,
yellow belt as gold line,
on black background is written

the flower garland dangles from His neck
the bower's Beauty!

14.4

The charm of Mdhab's beauty is incomparable on earth.
Her mind is all the way stolen, whoever takes birth!
In exchange of some wealth
Hari bought Radha's wreath;
did Shyam the Great take back its worth?
Madhu says, "Oh beauty! can it ever happen but that?"

15. IN THE BOWER

15.1

Alone I roam on the Jamuna bank,oh my dear!
I didn't meet my Brojo-Chief
tho' came quickly here to reap;
Oh friend! show me where is Brojo—the Tower?
For the morning ambrose,
hoping against hope arose,
as the lotus's mind climbs the sky
to meet the Flute-Holder,
Who is like Moon the Dear.
I, Your slave, came to You flying;
You are the Cloud, the Bower, the Moon, Nanda's King.

15.2

You know, how much I love Shyam, the Treasure!
I may be unfortunate,
still you know, my good mate,—
He, the King of arbour,
how much He loved me yet!
In your flower garden
He was a Guest when
played flute; Brojo's Charmer, Himself charmed!
You know, Who was the One,
hearing the seven tunes,
would come just for nothing and step at His crimson feet.

15.3

In those times—my mind trembles when I remember that—
in this beauteous bower—
me like Your shadow,
You'd coddle and bestow
me, self, Your slave, on a seat of flowers,
and trees would burst into colours.
when the humming bees cross,
blossoms like dainty maids,
would hide in veil of shreds,
flavours would fly in breeze,
their spread would never cease,
the Giver as Indra's Beloved
would bestow odour to bewitch with showers.

15.4

The philomel would sing in five musical notes
in praise of Love-God's stance;
looking at my Shyam in a rush,
and thinking of Him as nimbus,
and how happy would pea-hen dance;
can the arbour forget that,
nor me having witnessed at?
All that is recorded in Radha's mind;
the day the lotus will forget
the Sun's rise and set—
Oh charming bower, - Radha might forget Brojo's Find!
Oh mine! Who knows, when I might forget,
when death will thrash me to rest!

15.5

Tell me, friend, if you know where to find
Radha's Darling.
A friend of work, you're like honey,
you too are Shyam's bunny;
why are you alone today, dear,

Oh spring, where is your Lover?
I cry at your feet
and obediently sit;
where is my Shyam the pearl?
Tell me, oh bower's all!
Kindness in your heart,
like pollen in lotus,
break not Radha's heart with your silence,
Madhu says, " Madhusudan is dancing, listen, oh belles!"

16. LADY LOVE

16.1

What did you say, my love. Let me hear again,
your sweetest voice?
I turned suddenly deaf,
relieve me of this shape;
could I, in my shriveled life, hold on to that Ace?
Hello, I fall at your feet, tell me truthfully so,
Will Radha's Heart return back to Brojo?

16.2

Tell me, friend, will a flower garden
bloom again in this desert?
Will the waterless river
be full again with water?
Will wind play again on the water of the river?
Hello, I fall at your feet, tell me truthfully so,
will Radha's Heart return back to Brojo?

16.3

Oh friend! how much I suffered, separated from Shyam!
How much pain!
He, who is the In-Dweller,
He only knows us together,
who knows and can describe, how much I cry in vain?
Hello, I fall at your feet, tell me truthfully so,
will the Radha-Charmer return again to Brojo?

16.4

Oh! Where's Gokul's Moon, the Lover of Brindaban
The Lotus in the pond?
Sad in breathing,
The Brojo-Seed missing!
Oh Brojo the King, who will rule your kingdom?
Hello, I fall at your feet, tell me truthfully, so,
Will Radha's Jewel return again to Brojo?

16.5

Hi! The pea-hen eats up a snake's poisonous hood.
It shivers as with poison of separation rude,
Can a woman of good family
live to withstand such silly?
Hello, I fall at your feet, tell me truthfully so,
Will Radha's Gem return again to Brojo?

16.6

Look, I have stringed a flower-garland
a beautiful stringing,
like to hang on Shyam's neck,
just for friendship's sake
and want to tie Him down with love's binding.
Hello, I fall at your feet, tell me truthfully, so,
will Radha's Pleasure return again to Brojo?

16.7

What did you say, my love, let me hear again
the sweetest voice, though vain,
I turned suddenly deaf,
relieve me of this shape,
could I, in my shriveled life, hold on to that Ace?
Whose voice is sweet as honey,
why do you, why cry, my beauty?
How can Sri Madhusudan ever forget your face?

17.IN THE SPRING (I)

17.1

Why Bokul flowers bloom today in Gokul?
Tell me, my own,
Has the spring arrived, decorated in flowers?
Is the world galore?
Wipe off your tears,
let's all go, dear,
and listen under the Tamal,
terrific tunes, we shall.
If spring arrives, soon will Madhab be here!

17.2

When blooms bloom, cuckoos sing, friend,
in the flower garden;
the trees on fire,
bees buzz desire,
in love are all in lyrical vein,
Can we then forget to love,
forget, friend, Gokul's abode?
So let's go to the garden to participate to attain.

17.3

Listen friend, to the howl of wind,
deep in forest,
beholding Shyam, the Great,
gladdened in heart,
birds sing in the fest.

Is there any lotus unstained, friend? Let's all rest!
It is but his body- odour that the wind carries,
Oh mine! Shyam's body is the Source of all that rise?

17.4

Hark, mine! The Jamuna calls Radha breaking waves,
making caressing sound;
Shyam is found:
the Jewel of virtue craves,
like moon's bluffs
and playing on the waves;
let's go with fast steps,
and see the life's Shelter—to forget parting raves.

17.5

Like the bees sing, the lead cuckoo too sings
in so sweet a recess;
the leaves murmur,
water flows with slanting surfers,
with sound and wind's caress;
flower ladies laugh,
all around's happy and rap,
think, my mind, what will be the extent of happiness,
if Gokul's Jewel would appear now at this place!

17.6

Why the delay today, tell me, my friend,
I appeal to you, I plea;
why cry, down-crest,
covering the moon of your face,
tell me, my beauty,
you are normally happy in my happiness,
why are you then today in grimace?
and why the delay at this hour?
Let's – let's go to the bower.

17.7

We will cry pressing His lotus feet,
let's go fast,
Soon shall we observe,
how Sri Hari pacifies
this maid hapless!
With His sweet laughs and fond caress!
Ah! Let's go slowly, you – holding me,
I have lost all my strength, see!
What is in the bower, when it's empty; no Honey trace?!

18. IN THE SPRING (II)

18.1

Oh my sweetie—
the wood is lovely, bloom the flowers,
cuckoos are singing,
bees flitting,
water flows with murmur,
let's go to the woods, dear!
Let's colour our eyes, imbibing Brojo-pleasures.

18.2

Ah my sweet heart,—
peeps the dawn from Uday Mountain,
Come, see, it's laughing again;
this night of separation
spent with toleration,
what do I do now,
what's to be done?
The heart cries and flights;
Let's go to the bower, the Chief may still be dancing alright!

18.3

Oh my sweetie,—
the earth worships the spring today with flowers
with scented incense,
the forest is happy and dense,
the birds are chirping,
all round well-being,

Let's go, dear, to the bower,
for Shyam—worshipping!

18.4

Ah my sweet hearts,—
let's wash His feet,
offering torrents of tears;
our twin lotus-hands
will worship His feet, and
offering breath as incense, oh my charmer,
while jingling boughs provide music for His ears!

18.5

Oh my sweetie—
Let's offer the wealth of our youth to the Beloved.
Red marks on our foreheads
will turn into sandal paste;
we shall see ten moons
on his lovely nails;
in exchange, oh my ladies, let's beg for His immoral shade!

PART II

1. PLEASURE WALK

1.1

Dress up, Brojo maids, be fast,
put on your gems and jewels on hair,
waste band and girdling pair;
tie anklets on feet,
flowers on chignon plait,
dab sandal paste on body,
Then, what use staying in, when ready?
Hark, the flute repeats playing and we must.

1.2

Dances the shapely maid under the Kadamba tree,
Crown dressed in peacock plumes,
Shyam quietly exhumes,
pretty garlands dangling on His neck free,
lightning with clouds
likewise, my maid!
His yellow loin cloth dazzles - a mystery!

1.3

The lotus is happy in the lake,
your moon of hopes come,
the bower laughs, yet calm
why's your vow to desert the deck?

Gods and demons churn the sea
to grab the nectar which breaks out, free;
Do you desire it, my lovely?
Nectar on your lips,
Nectar for your sips,
Go, you shapely maid, to the bower; don't you agree?

NB: Thus abruptly ends the part II.

Part III, to be the 'UNION' part, and part IV the 'FULFILLMENT' part were not written either, sadly!

So, what follows is an attempt in audacity of the translator to pull the pieces together till the end as per his ability!

1.4

So let's friends—so near!
you and me, Radha together,
roam the banks of the Jamuna river,
in mind with the only prayer
to meet Him per chance
when playfully He tries to avoid our glance.

1.5

Then, when, He is with,
go wherever you feel like, my beauties,
leaving us two—Radha and Lord—alone
—the bee and the Drone,
leaving us to explore the possibilities
of the Jamuna, mountains and the trees,
teaching us hide-and- seek;
I, now proud, no longer meek!

PART III

2. THE UNION

2.1

Forgive me: Radha, my beautiful Brojo belles!
Do you think, I am, selfish and forget yourselves?
No, no, not at all, you all and me are the same;
My pleasure is yours too; me, Radha is only a name!
True, I have reached my Lord, The Giver, our Soul.
'Am busy, trying to unfathom, untangle my concept of goal.
But I know, I am not alone in sorting out the gigantic Him.
How can I forget all your efforts?
In seeking, we all are one team.

2.2

How can I describe the Mountain, when I myself am small?
How can I know the Ocean, when I only float and can never roll?
Pity me friend! I am alone before this mischievous Brojeswar;
I know, I am overwhelmed that I am with Him together.
He says nothing, does nothing, only He loves.
My inner doubt, am I suitable? Am I not stupid?
And the doubt rubs!
I am happy, very happy, overjoyed, flush with pride.
I wish, I could share and show my shame:
'am nothing like a bride.

2.3

Days will pass, months, years;
We will remain unknown to each other.
The wind will blow,
birds will soar,
flowers will spread their ware,
butterflies fluttering everywhere,
rains will not stop,
dews on grass top,
cuckoos will not build their nest,
but will sing in their earnestness best,
the pea-hen dances with its glorious plumes,
the spring with flowers, saplings and hues.

2.4

But I miss you, ladies, chanting in my ears,
the greatness of the Chief!
the playfulness and mischief,
the pain at heart of separation,
which is better,—separation or union?
'Am confused, my dearest, again bathed in tears;
mine—this union, celestial though, bids me prolong in fears.

3. FULFILLMENT

We have played with deer, seen the tiger,
We laughed, cried and pined for the Lord together.
We know each other, like palms of our hands.
We wanted, wailed and waited for His commands;
we were like dolls in His hands,
like sand-clocks without sands.
Remember the days when we asked help from every one;
the earth, echo, spring, bowers, flowers, sparing none,
we forget to distinguish;
men and girls—all coquettish
imagining that life is but one-time experience,
which meant Lord and none in the present tense;
we thought, play is all;
and we may like to recall,
never thought of: life is a duty,
a prayer to eternity.
It is the Gobindo, Govardhan, Brojoraj and God,
each one may have a story and episode.
It is our duty to respect all,
through work, that is worship, and all should crawl
before the eternity, through the eternity and to the eternity;
If we reach Krishna, we attain the divinity.

Now, MADHU's restless mind is in peace
Let MADHU's soul rest in peace.

Some other poems by
Michael Madhusudan Dutt

TO A BIRD AT SPRINGTIME

You are not a cuckoo, o bird of Bharat-fame,
carrier of Madhab's message, hearing whose songs,
Hundreds of Crores of flowers blossom in lovely groves;
Still, oh songster, the music you make, the way, the same—

Brings joy—to my mind in my earthly life, o dove!
It's honey-filled springtime, the world-over one,
When the earth's busy in meditation, and in love,
Who could be off-colour and sad in the sweet union?

The wild autumn, like a cruel dream in the land below,
As if it is pleased, as the earth is placid and struggle;
It's a time when, there could be no flowers in the tussel;
In totality it's dressed white like a widow!

Call the spring, please! let it come and dress up
The earth in an enchanting outfit; let it come sharp.

Translated from one of Madhu's 'CHATURDASH-PADI KABITABALI'.

THE BROJO EPISODE

Oh my brook! Does the Brojo beauty
weep at your bank,Mathura—yearning?
Do tears still spill in your kitty—
—as pearls?—Tell me, my beauty darling?

Tell me Brinda, Chandana—my friends,
do the waves still cross Kalindi cute—
to narrate (Radha's story) to the New King—folded hands?
Has the Gokul-episode ended its magnitude—

—to prostrate at the acting stage, like at a Bengali heart?
Oh, where's the Cow-herd-King, yellow-garlands?
And where's the deserted dear beauty sad?
How is He so cool to reign in far lands?

Is Brojo to be drowned in the bliss of forgetfulness?
Does Indra, why, send ominous rain in such torrents?

Translated from one of Madhu's 'CHATURDASH-PADI KABITABALI'.

THE PAST

At what cost do I buy the past again?
What's its price?—Whose advice do I seek today?
What's the exchange value, in wealth, coins,—
Gems, jewels for my priceless life gone-by?

Which god do I recall? Meditation? Religion?
Is there any Brahman or even an untouchable,
Whom gladly may I call my spiritual guru, to gain
Knowledge or theory, like a lotus is yielded by the stem?

Do the waves that guss down to the ocean,
Return so easily at all to the mountain again?
Does the water, the earth enjoys to quench thirst,
Come back to the clouds in any sky-rush?

Oh the past! Whoever loves you now, you are his!
But once past, none gets you and you give the miss.

Translated from one of Madhu's 'CHATURDASH-PADI KABITABALI'.

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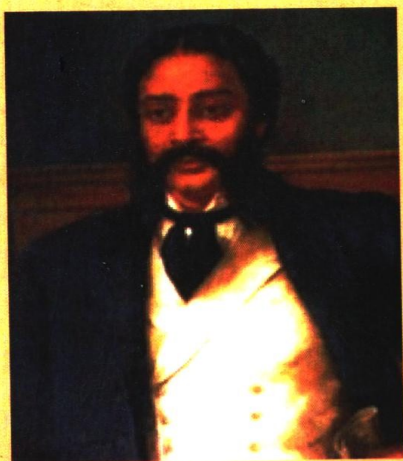
(Untitled)

The radiant lotus paints its own image
In clear water, helped by brightness of the Sun;
So have you painted my heart, gracious guest!
And who can ever free my heart of that fain,
As long as 'am living in mine this earthly frame?

As Ganga unites with Ocean, where she dwells
With wads of lotuses as pure gift of her love;
You too remain steady that way, sky above;
I may be near, may be far, where waves may swell,—

—I will worship you forever, whatever may happen;
You are the love's incarnation –in darkness and light;
Your adobe is in the monastery of memory's creation;
A constant company of mine on earth and beyond, in unison.

Translated from one of Madhu's 'CHATURDASH-PADI KABITABALI'.

This daring versified translation of 'BRAJANGANA KABYA'—a ballad epic of MICHAEL MADHUSUDAN DUTT, the Nineteenth Century genius of a Bengali Poet, who single-handedly revived interest in experimentation in Bengali poetry with tremendous impact and success; and the accompanying 'THE TRANSLATOR'S NOTE', authored by Sarbeswar Jana, a professional engineer and a part-time poet within his limited circle,—would be found nostalgic, provocative and interesting to those, who care for poetry and care to think.

Readers, going through it, would find that the translator, while taking care to remain as true as possible to the original, has taken liberty in versification; but then reproduction of the original, authentic flavour in translation would elude great many an author! Still the author's honesty of purpose, love for the rendering and care he has taken to do it, would be discernible.

'THE TRANSLATOR'S NOTE' dealing with the Bengal of Madhusudan's time may be taken as author's view.